

REMARKS

Claims 1 to 22 were pending in this case. By this paper, claim 1 has been amended to incorporate the limitations of claim 5 which has now been canceled. Claim 12 has also been amended to incorporate the limitations of claim 16 which has now been canceled. Accordingly, claims 1 to 4, 6 to 15 and 17 to 22 remain in the case for examination. In view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks, Applicants request reconsideration and allowance of the case.

The present invention is directed to a process to prepare a haze free base oil having a kinematic viscosity at 100°C of greater than 10 cSt from a Fischer Tropsch wax. The process is adapted to treat Fischer Tropsch waxes that are formed at remote locations. In a first step, the wax content of the Fischer Tropsch wax is reduced by contacting the feed with a hydroisomerization catalyst to form an intermediate product having a wax content between 10 and 35 wt%. This intermediate product is then transported from the remote location to another location closer to an end-user. In a next step, solvent dewaxing is used to treat the intermediate product to obtain a haze free base oil.

In the Office Action, claims 1, 11, 12 and 22 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Benard et al (WO 02/099014) in view of Bradford (WO 05/044954) and Womack, Jr. et al (US 5,866,751).

Benard is directed to a process to prepare a base oil starting from a slack wax containing feedstock that can include Fischer Tropsch derived wax. It does not address the problem of making a Fischer Tropsch wax feed more transportable by reducing the wax content to between 10 and 35 wt% such that it can easily be transported from a remote location.

The Bradford reference is directed to a process to transport methanol or another hydrocarbon product. In this process, air is separated into oxygen and nitrogen and the oxygen is used to prepare a mixture of carbon monoxide and hydrogen from a carbonaceous source. This mixture of carbon monoxide and hydrogen is then used to prepare methanol or a liquid or solid hydrocarbon product. The methanol or liquid or solid hydrocarbon product is then loaded onto a ship together with the nitrogen obtained in the first step. This reference does not disclose partially dewaxing a Fischer Tropsch wax feed to make it more transportable.

The present invention involves two separate steps to reduce the wax content of a Fischer Tropsch wax feed to obtain a haze free base oil. The first step is performed at a remote location to reduce the wax content to between 10 and 35 wt% so that it can more easily be transported. The partially dewaxed intermediate product is then transported from a remote location to a location near an end-user where it is subjected to solvent dewaxing to obtain the haze free base oil. Applicants submit that this two step dewaxing process is neither taught nor is it suggested by the references cited by the Examiner. The present invention provides an economic solution to transportation problems of Fischer Tropsch derived wax feeds at remote locations while providing high yields of highly viscous base oils.

Claims 2 to 10 and 13 to 21 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Benard et al in view of Bradford and Womack, Jr. et al and further in view of Miller (US 6,699,385). Applicants respectfully submit that these claims would not have been obvious for the reasons discussed above with respect to independent claims 1 and 12.

In view of the foregoing, Applicants submit that all of the claims are in condition for allowance and favorable consideration by the Examiner is requested. Should the Examiner find any impediment to the prompt allowance of the claims that could be corrected by telephone interview with the undersigned, the Examiner is requested to request such an interview.

Respectfully submitted,

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